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By constantly upholding and asserting the principles of the doctrine, this country has given to it the force of international law for now nearly a century and that without firing a single shot. After December, 1823, the European powers knew what to expect, and though frequently tempted to establish themselves, they were always induced in the face of our well-known policy to keep hands off. The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" holds still.

The Monroe Doctrine may not be a part of international law. It may be as Bismarck said, a piece of "international impertinence," but it has all the advantage of a well-established tradition and a sanction derived from a century of acceptance and support.

It is expedient and practical because we can today put behind it not only

the vast power and resources of our own country, but in large measure those of the South American continent as well. Its sanction is greater today than at any time in its history. And finally, it is sound policy because its principles are in harmony with the ideas of justice the world over.

The great declaration [says Mr. Root] was not a chance expression of the opinion of the feeling of the moment. It crystallized the sentiment for human liberty and human rights which saved American idealism from the demoralization of narrow selfishness, and has given to American democracy its world power in the virile potency of a great example.

The Monroe Doctrine has taken its place among the world's great charters of liberty. By securing the possibility of peace on this hemisphere it greatly advanced the cause of peace for the world at large.

The Monroe Doctrine and a World Organization

By HON. HENRY W. TAFT

New York City

IN the year 1823 the Napoleonic Wars had but shortly been concluded, when there was formed what was then exploited as a League of Nations for the preservation of peace. It had the high-sounding title of the Holy Alliance. It has been correctly described, however, as being neither holy nor an alliance. It was composed of most of the nations of Europe and was evidenced by an instrument couched in solemn and high-sounding phrase. Nevertheless, this country believed, and perhaps with some reason, that the chief object of the Alliance was the continuance and enforcement of the autocratic monarchical principle of government.

That idea resulted in 1823 in the

announcement by President Monroe of the national policy, which has ever since gone by the name of the Monroe Doctrine. Shortly before that, and this was the immediate and concrete occasion for its promulgation, the South American countries had through revolution succeeded in securing their political independence of Spain. It was anticipated, and in spite of the pronouncements which have been given by Professor Moore¹ from John Adams, it has always been my understanding, that the immediate cause of the Monroe Doctrine was the fear that these European nations, and particularly the members of the Holy Alliance, standing for the monarchical idea,

¹See page 31.

would seek to overthrow the then infant republics in South America. In such an event this country would be confronted with the possibility that by gradual and imperceptible encroachment the European nations would implant the monarchical idea again among the nations of South and Central America. The doctrine was announced, therefore, not as an expression of an intention on the part of this country to establish a hegemony over the South American territory, but as a purely defensive policy. That is to say, it was inspired by the fear that gradually one country after another in South America would be invaded, its territorial limits impaired or its political independence interfered with until they should again fall under the dominion of the European nations and finally there should be established in South America a monarchical system which would be a menace to the United States of America.

IN RELATION TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

It has been suggested that the South American countries resent our assertion of the Monroe Doctrine upon the ground that it is an assumption on our part of a national superiority which, while it may be justified by the material facts, is offensive to proud and self-sustaining nations. President Caranza even refused to admit that it existed. It seems to me that that feeling is based upon a misconception of the character of the Monroe Doctrine. We assert no superiority over the South American countries. We wish to do nothing which would impair the friendly relations between those countries and ourselves. They are entitled as much as we are to their national independence and such international arrangements as they choose to make. We do not wish to interfere with them,

as the history of the United States, particularly in modern times, will abundantly show. Take as an example our extreme self-restraint in the matter of a Central American country, that is to say, Mexico.

Now one difficulty about the Monroe Doctrine is that it is not particularly well understood. Professor Moore has called attention to a very interesting explanation of its reciprocal character.² That is to say, he has linked it with our policy in relation to European affairs. It undoubtedly has something to do with that, but that some confusion has arisen concerning the Monroe Doctrine is exemplified in the attempt in the new Article XXI in the League of Nations to describe it. Perhaps this confusion is not unnatural because our statesmen had not employed any uniform method of describing it. On the contrary, some of our ablest presidents and secretaries of state have given varying definitions of it, some of which, I am sure, would be at variance with the real meaning of the doctrine.

Generally speaking, presidents and the Senate have contented themselves with explaining the historical origin of the doctrine and have stated the immediate purpose of it, and, in a general way, how it has worked. But even the Senate in ratifying the Hague Convention of 1907 did not essay a definition of the doctrine. On the contrary, in seeking to preserve our rights, all they said was that it was not intended to imply any change in the traditional attitude towards purely American questions, thus leaving the question as to what that attitude was entirely to the interpretation of any publicist who was interested.

In the Venezuelan controversy, which took place in 1895, Secretary Olney said, "Today the United States is practically sovereign on this conti-

² See page 31.

nent and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its inter-position." As I conceive the correct conception of the Monroe Doctrine, Mr. Olney has in that definition over-stated its scope, or at least has employed a rhetorical expression concerning the power of this country, which would give to a casual reader a misunderstanding as to the real nature of the doctrine. Now, on the other hand, from Mr. Roosevelt, from whom one would expect no "pussy-foot" definition, we have a widely different application of the doctrine to a concrete case. There was an effort in 1901 by Germany to collect a debt from Venezuela and Mr. Roosevelt said that the Monroe Doctrine did not prevent foreign nations from collecting by force debts from nations of the Western Continent. And in 1866 this country refused to protect Chile when Spain was bombarding her ports, because it would not intervene in wars between European and American states "If," as the message was couched, "they are not pushed to the political point."

Now these illustrations show the difficulty of giving a precise and unvarying definition to the Monroe Doctrine. But we certainly can describe it as a formulation of a defensive policy for the protection of the United States against changes in the territorial boundaries or the political systems of the other states of the Western Continent on account of the possibility that such changes would impair its own independence as a nation or would be a menace to our peace with the other nations of the world.

IN RELATION TO THE LEAGUE

The gentlemen who phrased Article XXI of the Covenant of the League of Nations did not possess a very clear knowledge as to what the doctrine was. They referred to it as being a "regional

understanding." Perhaps, by a broad construction of that language one could apply it to the Monroe Doctrine, but as a matter of fact it does not precisely describe it.

It is quite interesting that the delegates of Great Britain in seeking to secure support for Article XXI of the League and to abate the excitement in this country aroused by the doubt as to whether that Article sufficiently safeguarded the doctrine, spoke of its origin and its purpose, and then said, "At first a principle of American policy, it has become an international understanding, and it is not illegitimate for the people of the United States to ask that the Covenant should recognize that fact." That interpretation has some interest, in view of the fact that, historically speaking, it was by the encouragement of England herself, who was not a member of the Holy Alliance, that this country announced the doctrine.

Some suggestion has been made as to the effect of the Bryan treaties upon the doctrine. The doctrine is not affected by those treaties. It is true that by those treaties with nearly thirty nations of the world we have agreed to subject to investigation and report all international disputes, and I can find no limitation in those treaties, except in one, upon the scope of the investigation. It follows that questions, even though they affect the national honor and the vital interests of a nation, must be subjected to investigation. And the nations agree that while the investigation is proceeding and for a certain period thereafter, resort shall not be had to war. After the decision shall have been rendered, the nations are at liberty if they see fit to resort to hostilities. I may state, and this has a bearing upon what has been said about the surrender of sovereignty under the League of Nations, that under the

Bryan treats a majority of the investigators who would inquire as to that question, involving possibly our national honor, would not be American citizens, although they would have the power to investigate and report upon such a purely American matter as the Monroe Doctrine.

Something like the Monroe Doctrine has been adopted in relation to Japan by the Lansing-Ishii agreements, under which this country has recognized that Japan has, on account of her propinquity to the Asiatic Continent, a peculiar relation to Asiatic countries. Precisely what is the nature of that interest is not defined by the letters, but it is noticeable that there is some general similarity between that arrangement and the Monroe Doctrine.

We should not misunderstand what

the beneficent doctrine is. I do not think that the danger which we sought to protect ourselves against has entirely departed. The history of the South American nations, with their multiplicity of internal rebellions, affords even to this day very persuasive evidence that if this doctrine were not asserted, ambitious militaristic or imperialistic nations of the world might invade those countries for the purpose of extending their power and procuring colonies for their peoples, or raw materials, and finally imposing upon them their political systems.

The Monroe Policy continues to be a policy of great wisdom, of absolute necessity, and we should continue to enforce it and never enter into any international agreement which would in any way weaken it.